

The Smell
o' the Turf

S. S. McCurr



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The Smell o' the Turf

By the same Author:
“ *IN KESWICK VALE*
& *OTHER LYRICS* ”

THE SMELL O' THE TURF

VERSES BY
SAMUEL S. McCURRY

With an Introduction by
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Trinity College, Dublin

"Let us go forth into the field."—SONG OF SOLOMON

DUBLIN
HODGES, FIGGIS & CO., LTD.
LONDON: SIMPKIN, MARSHALL & CO., LTD.

1912

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To
CHRISTABEL

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PREFACE

THESE essays in verse represent the work of those occasional hours of leisure which remain after a busy life day by day in the City, hours:

“When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,”
and weave rhymes chiefly for the pleasure of my family and friends.

The kindly reception accorded to my previous little book, *In Keswick Vale and Other Lyrics*, encourages me to hope that the present collection, with all its limitations, may be also acceptable.

Under the title “Ballads of Ballytumulty,” I have included some pieces written for the most part in the dialect of Ulster which I hope will appeal to

my fellow-countrymen; though it is possible that many of the Scots words introduced may not be so familiar to them as they were to me in days of boyhood. In these ballads I have attempted to illustrate some of the humour and pathos peculiar to my native North, which becomes not less dear as time advances.

S. S. McC.

*Glenageary,
Co. Dublin.*

INTRODUCTION

THIS is not the first volume of verse written by Mr. McCurry. In 1907 was published *In Keswick Vale and other Lyrics*. Many of the poems in that volume were written in the forms of the Rondeau, the Rondel, the Triolet, the Sonnet ; and perhaps what distinguished Mr. McCurry's work was the union of simplicity of matter and diction with a certain elaborateness of metrical form. These went well together, for even the metrical effects seemed spontaneous and unlaboured.

Here again the writer shows his affection for the Rondeau, and he has given us an example of his skill in the Villanelle. In both the earlier and these later poems he proves his genuine love for the more amiable aspects of external nature, and sometimes a sense, not unaccompanied with enjoyment, of some of its harsher moods; here, as in the former volume, he is inspired by a kindly and generous humanity, by a temper of sincere piety, and by an instinctive leaning towards things that are pure and of good report.

Pathos and something of humour were to be found in the earlier volume. But these have a

wider range in the present collection, and especially in the "Ballytumulty Ballads," in which the writer, following no model, makes a new departure in his work. The Ulster dialect, reported by Mr. McCurry, I have no doubt, with great fidelity, assists in his artistic effects. It gives the Ballads an impersonal and dramatic character. We are, I conjecture, amid Antrim scenes in the main, though whether Ballytumulty be discoverable on an Ordnance Survey map or be only a part of a poet's geography I am unable to say. The reader perhaps will be content with the assurance that there beside the "lough" her cousin and "boy" could "sit down an' cry" for the lost Agnes; and perhaps it was there that Ned McGuffin in the almost boundless liberality of friendship found that he must draw the line at—pigs.

After proposing his moral in the latter of these Ballads, "Too Much of a Good Thing," Mr. McCurry in a few lines gives us a vivid picture of the frosty night when the two worthies, under the exhilarating influence of "tay and toast," are seen crossing Tam McKeever's meadow, and he artfully reserves the surprise and sudden turn of their "crack" for the concluding lines which ring down the curtain. So in "The Unruly Member," which we might name "The Ulster Taming of the Shrew"—and with another Kate

for the heroine—we are led up through a series of stanzas to the final triumph of the Ulster Petruccio. It was again in Ballytumulty, not in Pornic, that Browning's girl of the gold hair had a near kinsman in Davy Long, who was a devotee of his Breton cousin's creed—

“Gold in heaven, if you will;

But I keep earth's, too, I hope.”

Spade-guineas serve for a test of character as well as double Louis d'ors, and if there was no priest in Ballytumulty to build an altar for his church, the coins went perhaps to as good a use in those “ten nice wee houses near the bridge.” Burns might have enjoyed the pawky humour of some of these ballads had they come from one of his Scottish contemporaries.

A favourite stanza of Burns is skilfully managed in “Andy Kyle's Awakening,” and some of the touches of nature, suddenly entering amid the pathos or humour of the ballad in the manner of their appearance reminds us of the great Scottish singer:—

The corncrake in the meadow near
Recalled the days to memory dear,
An' 'tween his notes the burn sang clear,
An' seemed to say,
'Tis bliss, 'tis bliss to carol here
Both night and day.

Mr. McCurry, who is always sincere and unpretentious, might object to being named in connection with one of the world's supreme lyrists, and might say that he is not the nightingale but only the sparrow, "Rusty-coat"; yet, even if this were so, has he not himself declared that "Rusty-coat's" song should not be stilled? Many accesses of pleasure come to us from singers that fill the place assigned to them in the chorus of early summer.

The reader of this volume will have a narrow feeling for poetry if he fail to receive enjoyment from many of its pages. In the shorter pieces there is often a touch of sadness, such as earth and time must needs bring to us all; but there is also something of unfailing cheer, something of strength and sustainment, which comes to harmonise the spirit if for a moment it droops.

EDWARD DOWDEN.

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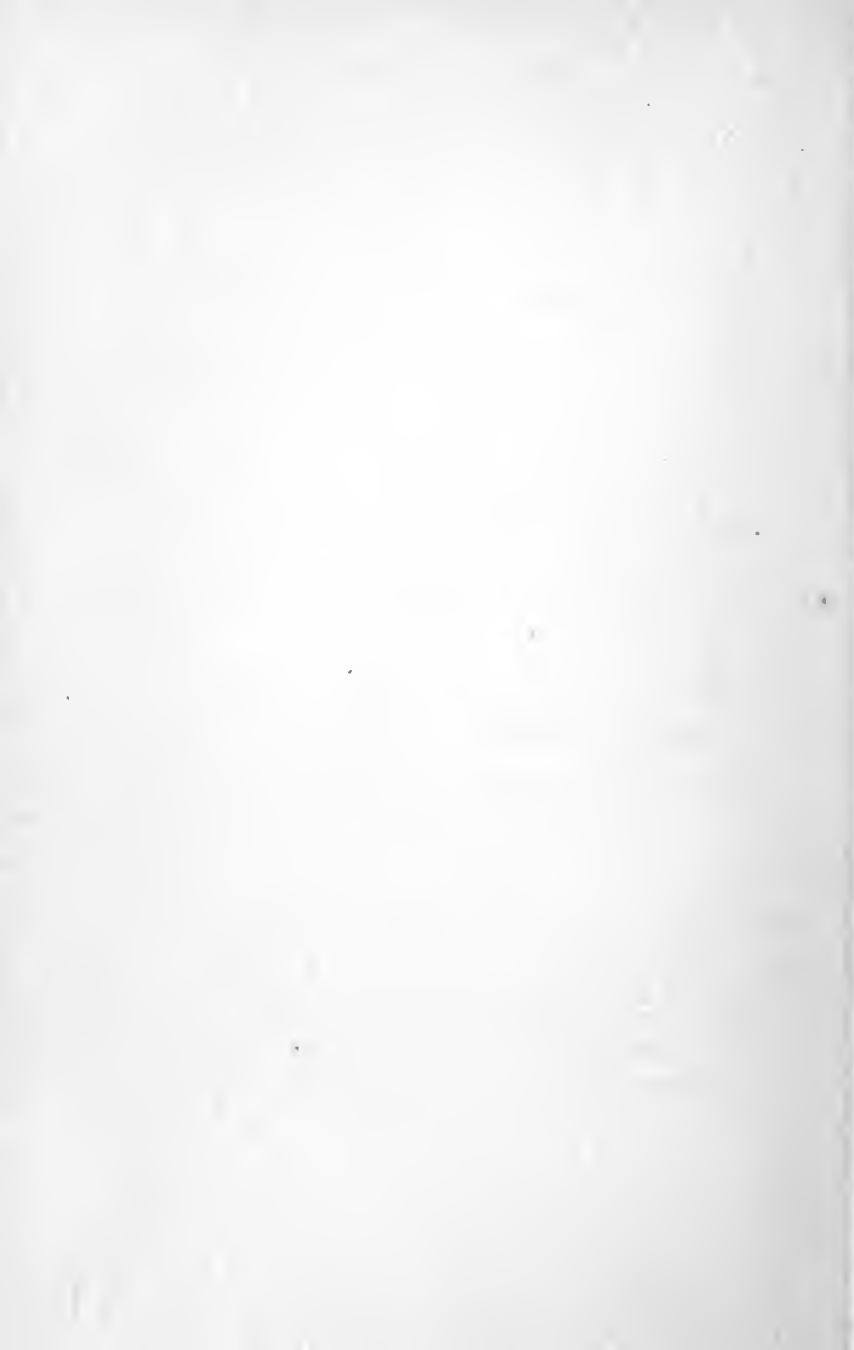
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THE SMELL O' THE TURF

THE smell o' the turf,—how it gladdens and
cheers

*My city-worn heart that has hungered for years
For a sight of the fields from the head of the hill
Where I listen again to the drone of the mill,
And I gaze on the scene of my childhood with tears.*

*Even now when in manhood dejection and fears
Oft shadow my pathway, and life's Autumn nears,
How it acts like a spell amid sorrow and ill—
The smell o' the turf.*

*How poor is the palace that royalty rears,
How poor is the treasure of princes and peers;
Give me, when the wind in the orchard is shrill,
And the voice of the thrush in the gloaming is still
The fragrant aroma the cottage endears—
The smell o' the turf.*

The Garden

RUSTY-COAT

A GARDEN where the blackbird's song
Delights the waiting ear,
What time the Spring with magic step
Returns the earth to cheer,
Awaking all the fragrant buds
That slept through Winter drear.

A summerhouse whose trellised walls
The honeysuckle knows,
Where through the leaves the morning sun
His waking splendour shows,
Where sweet it is to read and rest
At tranquil evening's close.

These, not the least of all the joys
That crown our peaceful days,
That kindle in our grateful hearts
The humble note of praise,
'And rouse afresh the rustic muse
To tune her artless lays.

It chanced one sabbath morn in May
When through the quiet air
The bells of Glenageary pealed
To summon us to prayer,
As round the verdant path we strayed
To scent the fragrance there.

Before our gaze a cherry tree
Stood robed in blossoms white,
Stirred by a gentle wind it seemed
A twinkling cloud of light,
Such as the painters of Japan
Have pictured for our sight.

There hiding 'mid the snowy blooms
The birds were wont to sing,
A mavis but an hour ago
Had made the garden ring;
When lo, there settled on the bough
A bird of poorer wing.

A sparrow he, of vulgar birth,
Through pride or envy drawn,
Chirped, chirped in cheerless monotone;
We shouted, "Hush, begone!"
And in our spleen a pebble threw,
But Rusty-coat sang on.

Then churchward as we went our way,
This thought our bosom filled,
Why should poor Rusty-coat be blamed?
Why should his song be stilled?
He did not choose his throat or coat,
He's just what God has willed.

Can Philomel with rapturous note
Before him claim the prize?
When he with all his native art
To laud his Maker tries,
When God who made them minstrels both
The choicer gift denies.

To us, to all the lesson comes
Who feeble gifts deplore,
And plead we cannot serve Him much
So slender is our store,
If like the birds we do our best
God does not ask for more.

Nor let us fret if in the race,
The race by God designed,
Another runs at fleeter pace
Through might of birth or mind,
But seek for sympathy and grace
To help the man behind.

VERONICA
(*Altro-purpurea*)

VERONICA! to sing thy fame
My rustic muse would humbly aim
To me thy fragrant blooms are dear
Beyond the fairest of the year;
To me there's music in thy name.

What tho' the Rose might seem to shame
Thy modest face, and poets frame
Soft madrigals to charm her ear,
Veronica,

'Tis when grim Winter comes to claim
His realm, and skies no longer flame,
Thy purple 'mid the foliage sere
Remains my lonely eyes to cheer,
Like love that age can never tame,
Veronica.

TO A MISSEL THRUSH
(*Villanelle*)

O MISSEL thrush, dost never tire
Thy song on wintry winds to fling?
Lone minstrel thou in Nature's quire.

I hear thee from my cottage fire,
Thy wild notes make the orchard ring;
O missel thrush, dost never tire?

Ere morn dispels the darkness dire,
Thou call'st like some uncanny thing;
Lone minstrel thou in Nature's quire.

The ploughman through the sleet and mire
His team delays to hear thee sing:
O missel thrush, dost never tire?

Art pressed with passionate desire
To wake with song the sleeping Spring?
Lone minstrel thou in Nature's quire.

More eloquent than poet's lyre
That follows thee with broken string;
O missel thrush, dost never tire?

Thou singest not for fame or hire,
O'er brooding envy thou art king;
Lone minstrel thou in Nature's quire.

Sweet hope thy cheering notes inspire
When shades of gloom around us cling,
O missel thrush, dost never tire?
Lone minstrel thou in Nature's quire.

THE CUCKOO

“OCH O, Och O!” like human wail
It sounded o’er the darkening vale,
As if some strange uncanny thing
Had mingled with the songs of Spring
The burden of its own sad tale.

Where art thou, mourner of the dale?
Doth love or loss thy spirit ail?
’Tis sad, in sooth, to hear thee sing
“Och O, Och O!”

Ah, type thou art of mortals frail
Who tremble when the lights grow pale,
Discerning not their Lord and King,
Who waits the balm of love to bring
To all who cry, when creatures fail,
“Och O, Och O!”

THE SONG OF THE YELLOW-HAMMER

I HEARD the yellow-hammer's plaintive song,
One April noon when Spring her jocund train
Had called from silence back to song again,
'Mid fragrant leaves to frolic all day long:
But hermit-like he shunned the piping throng
As if their pleasantry to him was pain,
And he must flute a melancholy strain
To tell the listening winds such joy was wrong.

What sorrow moved him that all-glorious day?
His song was like a sigh, foreboding woe,
As if he mourned for Summers passed away,
And feared cold Autumn when the leaves would
go:
So like poor humankind, self-centred still,
Dreaming of past delight or future ill.

JAPANESE ANEMONE

NOW thro' the wailing Autumn wind
That mourns for Summer left behind
Comes fair October, silent maid,
In scanty robe of russet shade ;
One lonely robin flits around
To glad her with his minstrelsy,
One pale flower greets her from the ground—
Sweet Japanese Anemone.

Thro' garnered fields she trips along,
Where late was heard the reaper's song ;
She brings a basket brimming o'er
Of luscious fruit, a laughing store ;
But all her fairest blooms are gone,
From days of chill they had to flee,
One hesitates and lingers on—
Brave Japanese Anemone.

With withering leaves she loves to bind
Her tresses from the western wind,
And pairs of peeping acorns found
'Mid trailing ivy on the ground;
In rural paths she looks her best,
An image beautiful to me,
A posy cuddling in her breast
Of Japanese Anemone.

See, shuddering thro' the shortened day
Tall poplars calling her to stay,
Oaks, wind-swept as she passes by,
Salute her who are soon to die;
But like the stately peaks that nod
Above the Vale of Chamounix,
And point the gazer to his God,
Stands Japanese Anemone.

Hail, blest October! I with thee
Should ever live contentedly,
The loves of youth and middle age
No longer should my heart engage;
And fearless would my spirit sight
The coming of the Enemy,
As wintry winds do not affright
Dear Japanese Anemone.

The Summer House



“ LIFE'S LITTLE DAY ”

“ **L**IFE'S little day,” I hear thee sing
In minor note of mournful ring,
But what avails the grief we show
That all too soon we graveward go,
Why touch again the doleful string?

What if churl Time be on the wing,
Fleet tho' he flies he stoops to fling
His favours: how they overflow
“ Life's little day.”

Yet lightly were it wise to cling
To all the sweets that time can bring,
To seek occasion to bestow
The love that we to others owe;
For self-reproach at eve can sting
“ Life's little day.”

IT MIGHT BE WORSE

IT might be worse!—the present woe
 Love summons thee to undergo;
Not joyous is the chastening rod,
Nor, wielded by the Hand of God,
Does He design to make it so.

Tho' in the cloud is set the bow,
His purpose He may not foreshow;
 This path thy fellow saints have trod;
 It might be worse!

When "afterward" the wind sings low,
And gloomy skies begin to glow,
 Above the present wintry sod
 The flow'rs of faith their blooms shall nod:
Then trust Him now when tempests blow;
 It might be worse!

“ WHILE WE HAVE TIME ”

“ **W**HILE we have time” let nought prevent
Our working out life’s good intent :
Of slender worth are aims sublime
To help the crippled ones to climb,
If only thoughts, not deeds, are meant.

Life for a little while is lent,
We reason when we should repent,
For knowledge makes inaction crime
“ While we have time.”

Were all our swollen wine-skins rent,
Their precious store on others spent,
The music in our hearts would chime
More sweet than in our golden prime,
And life give forth a fragrant scent
“ While we have time.”

WHY SHOULD WE GRIEVE?

WHY should we grieve, when all the way
'Twas Love that led us day by day?
If o'er our path the sorrow-cloud
Oft lingered, 'twas by Love allowed
To make us trust Him and obey.

If Holy Writ is wont to say
No second causes, yea or nay,
Exist for us, the heaven-endowed,
Why should we grieve?

Enough our daily dues to pay,
His care provideth, come what may:
When envious of our neighbour, proud,
Wealth-seeking like the worldly crowd,
Love checks us lest we go astray—
Why should we grieve?

The Open Road

GLENAGEARY

DO you know sweet Glenageary,
As it hangs o'er Dublin Bay,
At the head of Old Dunleary
Where the Channel breezes play?
By the foot of fair Killiney,
Where we climb to scent the briny,
And to watch the ships so tiny
Far away.

There is gold in Glenageary
When the voice of Spring we hear,
And the blackbird whistles cheery
To his mate a-sitting near;
When the hawthorn buds are growing,
And the balmy gales are blowing,
Where the yachts their sails are showing
Off the Pier.

THE SMELL O' THE TURF

O, the charm of Glenageary
When 'tis Summer in the grove!
And we hasten, hot and weary,
To the pool at Sandycove:
Or we linger by the fences,
As the cool of day commences,
While its beauty thrills the senses
As we rove.

But to stray thro' Glenageary
When October fills the air,
And the fields are hushed and eery
Is delight beyond compare;
When the Autumn woods are smiling,
All our fond regret beguiling
For the leaves around us piling
Everywhere.

Ah, the lanes of Glenageary
Are as welcome still to me,
When the Winter sky is dreary,
And the wind is blowing free;
There 'tis joy alone to ponder,
Or with bosom friend to wander,
When the lights are shining yonder
O'er the sea.

TO THE SUGAR LOAF, CO. WICKLOW

NOT when thy naked peak with splendour glows
In the pure stillness of a summer dawn,
Not when the cloudy veil is overdrawn
To screen thee from the glare that noonday knows
Art thou most beautiful in thy repose:
But when the mist of sultry day is gone,
And silent eventide creeps slowly on,
How exquisite and clear thy vision grows.

Then o'er the woods by fair Glencullen height
Streams the soft glory of the setting sun,
And all thy changing green is touched with
gold;
Like to some saint whose brow reflects the light
Of Paradise, ere days on earth are done,
Whom men are hushed in silence to behold.

ON THE THREE ROCK MOUNTAIN

WIND, Rock, and Tree! O memory sweet
That cheers me oft in crowded street,
When sultry June is in the sky,
And not a bird or flower is nigh
To glad me thro' the noonday heat.

Where Mammon reigns, a king complete,
And Fashion worships at his feet,
I muse on you, to you I fly,
Wind, Rock, and Tree!

Here with you now in cool retreat
No more the city surges beat,
On daisied turf at ease I lie,
And list the lonely peewit's cry
Who comes your welcome to repeat,
Wind, Rock, and Tree!

THE CROMLECH NEAR ENNISKERRY

LIGHTLY we pass, or gaze in scornful
mood

On this lone cairn where pagan bands of yore
The treasured ashes of their chieftain bore
For sepulture in earthen chamber rude;
And reared these monoliths gigantic, crude,
Which now for forty centuries or more,
The blasts, the blighting hail of winter hoar
From circling steeps have stubbornly withstood.

Yet in these stones, unlettered tho' they rest,
Are sermons eloquent, if still unread,
Telling of virtue in the savage breast
That toiled to honour the lamented dead—
Spark of celestial fire in love expressed,
Ere light from Calvary to Iverna spread.

AUTUMN AT ENNISKERRY

HARD by that leafy glen where all day long
The Dargle river sings its heedless song,
We wandered idly one October day
Thro' golden woods slow sinking in decay.
O'er the fair scene a tender veil was drawn
That half obscured the cottage and the lawn,
While the brave sun showed feebly thro' the haze,
As if exhausted after Summer days.
On Nature's brow pale care had come to rest
Dispelling lightness from her lover's breast,
But kindling thoughts too deep to be expressed.

How dear the memory of that happy hour,
Not Time's rude hand can rob us of its power;
Those hallowed reveries fondly we recall
Of Death and Life, of Love surmounting all—
The pride, the indigence of short-lived man,
The selfish schemes that fill his earthly span;
His endless toil the world's reward to win,
Unmindful still where riches true begin;

The virtuous care his manhood should engage
To share serenity in time of age,
As fading leaves with deeper beauty glow,
When winds are chill and Summer's sap is low.

The road ascending from the river side,
We reached a cottage where the paths divide:
Beneath the lime-trees tall embowered it lay,
Completely mantled by a creeper grey,
Whose leaves, slow changing in the Autumn sun,
Seemed loath to recognise their day was done.
Against the foliage in a cage confined
A goldfinch warbled to the passing wind,
As if it would outmatch in endless flow
The song that echoed in the vale below;
While in the porch half hidden by the shade
All bashful stood a little rustic maid.
Her eyes, her hair, the witchery of her face
Proclaimed a daughter of the Celtic race,
As yet unconscious of her native grace.

A little knoll above the cottage rose,
Whence gleamed the valley where the Dargle flows,
Where from the glen it issues loud and strong
To wind its course the verdant meads among.
Far o'er the landscape under cloudless skies
The russet hues of Autumn met our eyes,

And where the Sugar Loaf his summit showed
Along his slopes the purple heather glowed.
How exquisite the sweep of hill and dale
From Bray Head mountain to our Dargle vale,
Where half concealed fair Enniskerry lay,
Silent and drowsy on the sunniest day,
And yonder pencilled on the neighbouring skies
Stood the great "Scalp," a wonder to our eyes.

'Twas sweet 'mid rustling leaves to roam at will
Thro' sylvan avenues now hushed and still,
Where the lone mavis, scared our steps to hear,
Sought refuge in some ivied coppice near,
Where sudden o'er the boughs would nimbly leap
The startled squirrel, pausing oft to peep,
While overhead still came the eerie sound
Of falling leaves slow, slow to kiss the ground.
O'er stately trees the hand of Death had passed,
And motionless they seemed to wait their last,
Fair beeches tall with trunks of silver grey
All whispering stood in groups of close array
As if in sympathy, and each had power
To cheer his comrade in his passing hour,
To softly tell him in his time of pain
Cold wintry winds their boughs should strip in vain,
For smiling April with life-giving breath
Ere long should wake them from their sleep of death.

How precious are the truths that Nature kind,
Still to her lovers pensively inclined,
From her full page with heavenly light aglow,
Is wont in all her changing moods to show.
But minds ambitions in the earthly race
For things of fair report have little place.
How to increase the hoard that fortune gave,
Controls us from the cradle to the grave.
Thus all in vain her message from our breast
Can steal away the turmoil of unrest,
Can soothe our strife, and charm the hours of gloom,
Grown deeper as we near the certain tomb.

O that as years unseen their course extend,
And whitening hairs proclaim my coming end,
Some clearer vision of the Love divine
That speaks in silent Nature may be mine.
That I, from calculating care set free,
Might closely trace His steps in earth and sea,
His awe-inspiring Hand might recognise
In moving orbs that light the distant skies
And mark with self-rebuke how all fulfil
In mute obedience their Creator's will:
So might divorce the fears my breast frequent,
Spurn fame and pride to be at last content,
And prove to fellow travellers on the road
How potent is a life close linked with God.

ON THE BANKS OF THE BOYNE

ON the Banks of the Boyne in the sweet month
of May,
We strayed at our ease in the cool of the day,
The light on the stream was beginning to wane,
And soft thro' the valley the cuckoo's refrain
Made deeper the hush in the solitude grey.

In contrast, we mused on a time passed away,
When kings here assembled in battle array,
And wet was the turf with the blood of the slain
On the banks of the Boyne.

“O Erin!” we murmured, “thou innocent prey
Of lovers inglorious who lead thee astray,
How long in the dusk wilt thou linger in vain,
Ignoring the Light that can mould thee again
As peaceful and pure as the zephyrs that play
On the banks of the Boyne?”

AT AMBLESIDE

AT Ambleside what happy hours
We spent despite the summer showers;
How oft with Rotha for our guide
We wandered as the daylight died,
And drank the fragrance of the flowers.

On Wansfell Pike where cloudlet lowers,
And height the senses overpowers,
We sat mid summits circling wide
At Ambleside.

But not the feast the eye devours
Of light and shade on crags and towers,
And not the purple wreaths that glide
From Silver How on Grasmere's tide
Could match our love amid the bowers
At Ambleside.

Pilgrimage

COWPER'S GARDEN AT OLNEY.

IN these loved shades where quietude and
rest
To sweet reflection woo the pilgrim guest,
'Tis good at silent eventide to stray
'Mid relics of a time long passed away,
To view with lover's eye the classic bowers
Where saintly Cowper spent his tranquil hours,
Musing on Nature with poetic thrill—
Her fairest images discerning still.

O stranger coming from afar to gaze,
With reverence tread these truly hallowed
ways,
Mayhap his gentle spirit hovers near,
Haunting the paths in days of lifetime dear:
By kindly fancy urged again we trace
His slender frame, his meditative face,
As pausing mid his toil he stoops to find
The first brown leaf that flutters in the wind.

Still thro' the village street the children cry,
The street familiar to his dreaming eye;
Still with returning Spring the buds appear,
Fresh visitants to keep his memory dear;
Still in his garden fair the fragrant bloom
Proclaims dominion o'er its native tomb:
And faith declares our Poet too shall rise,
To find his blest fruition in the skies.

GRAY'S TOMB, STOKE POGES
CHURCHYARD

LATE Autumn noon, lit by a sickly sun
Whose pallid circle faintly gilds the trees
That sigh disconsolate, while the fitful breeze
Lays bare their drooping branches one by one.
Silent we mourn that Summer days are done,
Yet mid the gloom our spirit is at ease,
For while the leaves are falling fast it sees
The certitude of fairer life begun.

Mayhap this mood our gentle Poet knew,
As musing oft beneath "that yew-tree's shade,"
Touched by a sympathy divine, he drew
The legend of the lives around him laid,
Bringing to light their pathos deep and true
In strains whose influence shall never fade.

CARLYLE'S HOUSE, CHELSEA

LOCKED in the stillness of this narrow den,
Self-consecrate to set the world aright,
Nigh half a century he waged the fight
Against the foibles of his fellow men;
Toiling to purify the noxious fen
Of pride and folly with a prophet's might:
But while he vexed his spirit day and night,
Love's better way came not within his ken.

Vain, vain the task by feeble man essayed,
Blind to the mission of the Crucified,—
His will by native reason held in thrall:
He builds upon the shingle, unafraid,
While Faith with vision clear discerns the tide,
And cries with warning voice, "Thy house
shall fall."

MILTON'S COTTAGE, CHALFONT
ST. GILES

SEE! 'tis the very portal black with age,
The grimy threshold where the Poet's feet
Were wont to pass, what time he sought retreat
'Mid these sequestered scenes, untouched by rage
Of pestilence that fiercely did engage
Fair London Town. Still breathes the garden
sweet

Where with his staff he found his rustic seat
To scent the rose, or build his lofty page.
Can'st picture him! with massive brow, deep-lined,
Whose seraph-muse the highest heaven attained,
Outsoaring all the limits that confined
Fancy aforetime—now from earth unchained,
Singing to men who spurned him, poor and blind,
His deathless song of Paradise Regained.

EVENING IN GRASMERE CHURCHYARD *

APPROACH, fond Pilgrim! Meditate unseen
Here in God's Acre. Mark the humble mound
Where Wordsworth lies! Dost grieve that thou
hast found

The spot long dreamt of, unpretending, mean?
Is thy breast filled with disappointment keen
He slumbers not with kindred race around,
In dim cathedral shade, with marble crowned—
The resting-place of poet, king, and queen?

'Tis better so! Fair Nature whom in youth
And age he wooed unwearied comes to keep
Long vigil by her lover's lowly grave,
While Marg'ret, Michael, or some hapless Ruth
May steal aside in solitude to weep,
When darkness lies on Rotha's murmuring
wave.

* This and the two following sonnets have appeared in
"In Keswick Vale."

FEZ

IN shadow of a crumbling mosque he stands,
An aged mendicant with want outworn,
Eyes from their sunken sockets ruthless torn
For crimes in lawless youth,—for so demands
The cruel Moslem code. With trembling hands
Outheld for aid he only lives to mourn,
Till kindly Death beyond the earthly bourn
Shall carry him at last, and loose his bands.
To motley crowds that careless come and go
He murmurs, “Give me what belongs to
God”:
That cry proclaims that debt that Christians
owe
His country where Mohammed’s legions trod,
And with the sword their creed unholy spread,
Robbing her children of the Living Bread.

THE COLOSSEUM

O ITALY, gratuitous and vain
The time-worn task, to chronicle once more
The valour of thy doughty sons who bore
The Roman Eagles far o'er land and main;
Better the Bard in love for thee refrain.

In sooth thy fairest page is sullied o'er
By dark rehearsals, and the heart is sore
With Cæsar's vices. Silence is a gain.

But long as white-winged Faith her throne shall find
In human hearts, that nobler, nameless band
Shall ne'er to cold oblivion be consigned
Who courted suffering on th' Arena's sand,
And showed a frowning world how heroes die
Moved by a love that answers Love on high.

IN THE CATACOMBS

“**V**ALERIA sleeps in peace”: no more we know
Of her whose sacred dust reposes here,
But fond Imagination lingering near
Rends the dark veil of ages long ago,
And sees a slave, who drank the cup of woe
In Cæsar’s household, till serene and clear
The Gospel light dispelled her darkness drear,
And bliss was born the world could ne’er bestow.

Here oft she stole, forgetful of her care,
When light along the Tiber shore grew dim,
In these dark galleries to kneel in prayer,
To hear the Word, or chant the vesper hymn,
And when by Cæsar’s sword she fell asleep,
One whom she loved crept here to watch and weep.

ABOVE GRYON, RHONE VALLEY

ON dizzy heights we caught the distant chime
Of noonday pealing in the vale below,
And traced the winding Rhone's impetuous flow
Where fought the mighty Romans in the prime.
Thence upward speeding on our venturous climb
We touched the region of eternal snow,
And joyed for one brief spell the calm to know
That reigns in Alpine solitudes sublime.

There hidden by a grove of ancient pines
A church we spied with walls of homely build,
Carved on its timbers stood the sacred lines—
An echo of the solemn thoughts that filled
Our hearts in that still hour of God's infinity—
“*De cité permanente nous n'avons point ici.*”

BEETHOVEN'S HOUSE, BONN

TURN not away, O friend, tho' glist'ning tear
Proclaim thy tenderness while hushed we
stray

Thro' these dim galleries whose walls display
Fond relics of the master we revere.

Those sweet sad melodies thro' lifetime dear,
That well translate the grief that comes to prey
Upon our spirits at the close of day
In lonely places, have their meaning here.

How deep his suffering none may estimate,
For like Beethoven none was ever tried;
'Twas his the sweetest music to create,
But power to list its sweetness was denied:
Yet with a lion's heart he conquered fate,
And men applauded while unseen he sighed.

THE WARTBURG, EISENACH

(Where Luther was confined)

FOUR teeming centuries their flight have taken,
Freighted with memories of battles won
For love of Truth, since thou, her darling son,
Pent in a gloomy cloister didst awaken,
To find her by her faithless guards forsaken,
Divorced from Liberty, defamed, undone;
And forth didst lead her, strong to leap and run
No more by fear of man cast down, and shaken.

Here for an interval, when round thy barque
The storm of persecution fiercely rose,
A Patmos thou didst find, where tempests dark
Served but to deepen thy secure repose;
And these grey battlements remain to mark
God's power to shield thee from thy priestly foes.

Miscellaneous

TO PROFESSOR DOWDEN, LL.D.

(*Acrostic*)

"E STEEM" is not the word my verse demands,
D aring to voice the feeling that expands
Within my bosom, since the memoried hour
A mid life's cares I knew thy friendship's power;
R ecording Time has proved it oft to be,
D own thro' the kindly years a "sheltering tree."

D id not thy Shakespeare scorn the useless might
O f him who sought to paint the lily white?
Why should I beggar words to sound thy fame,
D o not thy countrymen thy worth acclaim,
E xtol thy muse, thy learning's wide estate,
N ay, even the gentleness that makes thee great?

TO DR. WHELDALE STANLEY,
On his leaving Glenageary for Baghdad.

HOW soon the years their magic course have
run,
And thou, O friend, a youth but yesterday,
Strong man art grown, impatient for the fray
Where Moslem foes attack God's Holy One.
Let men and angels stand and cry, "Well done,"
When God's own warriors at His word, "Away,"
Ne'er hesitate His order to obey,
But march to win the Kingdom for His Son.
O, let this thought breed courage in thy breast,
Should'st thou, His witness in a land forlorn,
Be prone to feel disheartened and depressed,
That men reject thy Master's love with scorn:
Hearts in the homeland make thy cause their own,
And night and day uphold thee at the Throne.

TO A FRIEND, (R. C. MORGAN,)

On his Eightieth Birthday.

TO you, dear friend, whose locks attest
The time has come for well-won rest,
To you whose actions seem to say
You came of age but yesterday
This little off'ring is addressed.

In prose it better were expressed—
The birthday wish that warms my breast,
The love that always loves to stray
To you, dear friend.

Ah, in your face there shines confessed
The presence of that hidden Guest,
Whose Name we know, whose sunny sway
Transforms December into May,
And of His bounty gives the best
To you, dear friend.

IN MEMORIAM

SIR JAMES CREED MEREDITH, LL.D.

SOFT moans the wind around each hallowed tomb
In this dark city of the silent dead,
But, near, a missel thrush disturbs the gloom
With cheering note by kindly Nature led.

In the dull east the sun with duteous grace,
As not unconscious of the scene forlorn,
Peeps thro' the clouds that hide his friendly face
To light the lonely graves this winter morn.

But whence the mournful column that invades
The winding path to yonder heap of clay?
Ah, 'tis no idle pageant here parades
To move our sympathy by mute display.

Drawn by the link that sweet affection knows
They come, his brethren of the "mystic tie,"
To shed the mindful tear that pity owes
To one they loved, too early called to die.

To die! Nay, better far the boon they reap,
Who in their pilgrim years the Saviour trust;
And he we mourn has only sunk to sleep,
Till the last trumpet shall wake him from the dust.

But who the measure of his worth may tell,
His native zeal, untiring till the end,
His life domestic, where he played full well
The sacred rôle of husband, father, friend.

Scarce had his life attained its looked for length,
The storied span of three score years and ten:
Ah, woeful thought! too prodigal of strength
He toiled, the servant of his fellow men.

In vain shall grief her fair memorial rear,
No gilded epitaph a good man needs;
To us remains a heritage more dear—
The fragrant memory of noble deeds.

THE PRISONER

WHERE sombre Liffey seaward rolls his
tide,

High up on wall of tenement there hung
A captive lark, that on the breezes flung
His liquid notes, as if he scorned to hide
His native talent—liberty denied.

He sang as if that moment he had sprung
From dewy mead, and, jubilant o'er his
young,
Could not restrain his rapture if he tried.

No slave to dull surroundings, nor deterred
By absence of his mate, or field, or tree,
The song, the enchanting song that Shelley
heard

Outpoured he with the same impetuous glee :
But thou, God's pensioner, with care-lined
brow,
'Art dumb thro' petty circumstance : sing thou !

A LAY OF LLANGOLLEN

O HAD we grace enough to prize
The simple tale of hope or fear
Breathed by the poor ones we despise
In our unwilling ear,
What thought and tenderness like flowers
Would bloom in these dull hearts of ours,
What sympathy like April showers
Would come to bless and cheer!

In fair Llangollen's sunny vale
There lived and laboured years ago
A worthy couple, blithe and hale,
Whom good it was to know:
Beloved by all their neighbours round,
They tilled their slender plot of ground,
And in its yield sufficient found,
To meet their wants below.

Content was theirs, content that springs
From daily intercourse with heaven,
What joy to humble hearts it brings—
A joy that knows no leaven:
Beyond the wealth of Plutus' mine,
Or sparkling gem from Inca shrine
Is sweet content, that grace divine,
To mortals sometimes given.

But with the lapse of three decades
Our sturdy yeoman feeble grew,
Infirmary his heart invades,
He did the toil of two:
And prisoner now he must remain,
No more to brave the wind and rain;
But tho' in body worn with pain,
No grief his spirit knew.

The change his gentle partner bore,
Reposing on the Arm unseen,
She counted not her burden sore,
While he remained serene:
To meet the ebb of fortune's tide
Her rose-crowned porch she opened wide,
A home for strangers to provide
Who sought their valley green.

A little bower of wood and glass,
Roofed in from gales and wintry showers,
In bright seclusion saw him pass
The solitary hours.
Deep seated in his spacious chair,
And wrapped from hostile draughts of air,
He conned his book in stillness there
Amid the ferns and flowers.

Four weary years without reprieve,
An invalid with broken frame,
He never pined from morn till eve
And talked with all who came.
He watched the seasons come and go,
The summer's sun, the winter's snow,
The joys that Nature has to show
To those who love her name.

The waters of the winding Dee
Sang thro' the valley's fair expanse,
And on their bosom he could see
The morning sunbeams dance;
Lone grasses waving in the breeze,
The changing colour of the trees,
The blackbird singing at his ease,
All filled him with romance.

One wild March morn with hands of love
She wheeled him to his wonted rest,
And fearing time might lonely prove,
Her wifely moan she pressed.
He heard, and with a smile declared
No mortal knew how well he fared,
For Nature every day prepared
Fresh charms before unguessed.

Around him lay a mine of wealth
To make him rich, to make him wise,
Which he in days of ruddy health
Had ventured to despise.
Now in the silence he explored
The treasures by his threshold poured,
With truth for meditation stored,
Too deep for careless eyes.

But well the secret he had learned,
By Nature's lovers seldom seen,
Her power where suff'ring is concerned
Can feebly intervene:
Her fairest scenes can ne'er impart
Full solace to the sinking heart,
May salve, but cannot heal the smart
Of disappointment keen.

'Tis only He Whose Hand designed
The faultless lilies of the field
Can meet the woes of humankind,
And prove a sun and shield.
His Voice in Nature is supreme,
And well our hero caught Its theme ;
So bliss, beyond the poet's dream
Of beauty, was revealed.

Thus with that lowly form it fared
Four winters bound in sickness' chain
God's whisper all the while he heard
Above the call of pain ;
And shadows on the hills in May
Had something eloquent to say—
Soon sorrow's cloud would pass away,
And loss would end in gain.

So proved it one October eve,
When leaves were trembling in the blast,
With none at hand to make him grieve,
The morning broke at last ;
And Autumn winds around his bier
Their voices raised in requiem clear,
Wailing for one who held them dear,
To cloudless regions passed.

Ballads of Ballytumulty

AGNES

O CH, sore is my heart for the day that is
gone,

For the day that I'll niver see more,
When I lived a wee lad, an' knowed nothin'
o' bad

In the moss jist beside the Lough shore,

Ay, ay!

Near oul' Ballytumulty shore.

Do you listen that win' thro' the crack in the
doer,

An' the sugh¹ in the beeches out by²?

Well, you'd har'ly believe how the soun' makes
me grieve:

In throth I cud sit down an' cry,

I cud—

Sit down on a creepy³ an' cry.

¹ a rushing sound.

² out by]outside.

³ stool.

For the voice of wee Agnes, I hear it that plain,
Wee Agnes, light hearted an' free,
I mind she come here in the spring o' the year
When she wuzn't the height o' your knee,
Yis, yis!
No more nor the height o' your knee.

An' I wuz her cousin, and I wuz her "boy,"
Och, the notions that childhre will take,
We wor like as two pays, I wuz proud as ye plase,
An' I said I wud die for her sake,
Ay, ay!
Wud die for her darlin' wee sake.

Well, you know what come nixt: when a lump of
a boy,
I be to head out like the rest,
My fortune to thry, so I bid her good-bye,
An' I sailed for the land o' the west;
Man, O man,
But my heart it wuz sorely disthressed!

Well, Agnes grewed up till the age of nineteen
An' I'm toul' wuz a picture to see,
The neighbours allowed,¹ not a girl in the crowd
Wuz as sonsie² an' cliver as she,
Sorra one!
An' she sung like a bird in the three.

¹ declared. ² winsome.

An' sweethearts in plenty come "spakin'" at night,
 All hopin' in vain for her han',
 Till one nice-behaved, with a good penny¹ saved,
 An' two hundred fine acres o' lan',
 Won the day;
 An' the weemen declared it wuz gran'.

He wuz Brown from the river near Derrymagee,
 A likely young fellah an' tall;
 So they made no delay in settin' the day
 An' the hour for the weddin' an' all,
 Dear ay!
 But you niver know what'll befall.

The night jist before, it wuz stormy an' wil'
 An' the house, it wuz shakin' like mad;
 You'd a' thought ivery blast wud be surely the last
 The win' it wuz blowin' that bad,
 It wuz:
 None minded² it iver so bad.

An' Agnes wuz sleepin' her lone³ with her aunt,
 But, alas! in the midst o' their dhrames
 On a suddint they woke nearly smuthered wi'
 smoke,
 For behold you, the house wuz in flames —
 Jist think!
 They in bed, an' surrounded wi' flames.

¹ good penny]fair amount. ² remembered. ³ her lone]alone.

Och! that wuz the place in the dead o' the night,
Wi' the neighbours all flyin' about,
Till big Watty Duff wuz detarmined enough
To tear in an' drag both o' them out:
But for him,
They wor both burnt alive, not a doubt.

Well, her aunt wuzn't bad, but the sight left their
eyes,
When the face of poor Agnes they seen,
An' her lovely brown hair—there wuz none of it
there,
The fire had burnt it aff clean;
Och anee!
Had burnt ivery hair of it clean.

Her looks, they had vanished like snow aff the ditch
'Twuz enough to bring tears from a stone,
Twelve weeks till a day on the feathers she lay
Before she could sit up her lone,
It's a fact—
Too wakely to sit up her lone.

An' my brave Mr. Brown with his money an' lan',
When they brung him the news niver stirred,
Niver darkened the doer, to tell her for sure,
He wud still be as good as his word,
Like a man!
Or wuz sorry for what had occurred.

It wuz this broke her heart, as ye'll aisy suppose,
 Sure the pain of her burns she cud bear,
 But his stiffness an' pride, his affection denied,
 Dhriv' her min' to the brink o' despair,
 Och anee!
 What she suffered no tongue cud declare.

But she grew brave an' well in the days o' the
 spring;
 So a lovely wee cottage they foun'
 Far away in the wud when the trees were in
 bud,
 An' the daisies wor jist above groun',
 Yis, yis!
 With the birds to sing welcome all roun'.

II.

Ten years passed away, ten long lonesome
 years,
 An' I be to come home from abroad,
 I wuz hearty an' sthrong, but I always thought
 long¹
 For oul' Ballytumulty sod—
 Och, och!
 For the frien's an' a sight o' the sod.

¹ thought-long]felt homesick.

When we met she wuz shy that her beauty wuz
gone,

Tho' she still wuz as lovely to me,
I'd 'a' made her at aise for the rest of her days—

I wuz brave an' well-aff she cud see;

I wuz, heth¹:

All the same, she wud niver agree.

But I deemed that her heart wuz in pain for the
man

Whose wife she had niver become,
It's always the way with the weemen, they say,
Or at laste it's the manner o' some,

Jist think,

How tarble the notion o' some!

Her sorra had made her that kin'ly an' good,
She niver wud murmur nor fret;

Ay quate an' resigned, an' religious inclined,
Her saftness you'd niver forget;

It's throe!

Sweet crayther as iver you met.

Not far from her home in the heart o' the wud,

There's a glade where the river runs deep,

There whiles she wud sthray in the cool o' the day,

When the birds wud be goin' asleep;

Yis, yis!

An' the shadows beginnin' to creep.

¹ truly.

Far an' near on the morn she wuz buried they come,
 In the graveyard her headstone appears,
 Where they laid her at rest, in her weddin' things
 dhressed,
 The gown she wuz keepin' for years.
 Och, och!
 The gown she had soaked with her tears.

Do you listen that win' thro' the crack in the door,
 An' the sugh in the beeches out by?
 Well, you'd har'ly believe how the soun' makes
 me grieve,
 In throth, I cud sit down an' cry,
 I cud!
 Sit down on a creepy an' cry.

ANDY KYLE'S AWAKENING

I T'S sixty year since Andy Kyle
First saw the light in Glenamoyle;
I mind him when I was a chil',
Canty an' gay,
His crack¹ an' capers make me smile
Even the day.

We played together, him an' me,
An' speeled² my uncle's apple tree,
Mitchin' from school till after three,
On sport engaged,
Like larks that fin' their liberty,
Once caught an' caged.

When care come on us all too soon,
'Twas Andy kep' our hearts in tune,
Like sunshine in the month o' June
He made us bright,
His face shone like the risin' moon
On harvest night.

¹ conversation. ² climbed.

But by an' by the time come roun'
When Andy be to go to town,
An' all he owned was half a crown,
(Not much to boast of,)
But gie an'¹ soon he made a poun',
An' saved the most of.

Andy was at it late an' early,
A holiday he tuk but rarely,
An' very quick he prospered quarely,
As guess you may,
His customers he thrated fairly,
Which made things pay.

He made an' sow! a patent pill
To cure all kin's of human ill;
When brimmin' over was the till
 He wed a lady,
Who brought more grist to Andy's mill,
 So full already.

But what's not quite the rule the day
Throughout the North, so people say,
The more he got he give away,
My story credit,
He kep' it not with lock an' key
Because he made it.

¹ gie an'|very.

In politics at whiles he mixed,
An' sore "the other side" he vexed;
A magistrate they made him nixt,
Nor stopped he there,
Till, in the Corporation fixed,
They made him Mayor.

He throve and throve, but by an' by
A cloud come intil Andy's sky:
One dhreadful night with no one nigh
But Andy only,
His bonnie wife she be to die,
An' lave him lonely.

Och, cruel death, it's hard to bear ye!
To what disthress can man compare ye?
They're mad that say they 'most prefer ye
To want an' woe,
But when ye come they'd gladly spare ye,
Aye loath to go.

Poor Andy's married bliss was brief,
No wane was his to share his grief,
When rich men sigh the world is deef,
An' little bothers;
But Andy's sorra found relief
In helpin' others.

II.

Now after winters four had fled
A thought come intil Andy's head,
A second wife he be to wed
His hearth to cheer,
An' back to Glenamoyle he sped
For Nancy Greer.

He knew her as her father's frien'
They lived as neighbours in the glen,
An' sweet to him she seemed as then
As blithe an' sonsie,¹
A stranger to the wiles of men
Was simple Nancy.

Ay, good she was beyond compare,
With dimpled cheek an' dusky hair,
Grown up as innocent an' fair
As Nature found her,
Fresh as the fragrant country air
That whistled round her.

To mark with joy his weddin' day,
The debts that on the parish lay,
My noble Andy be to pay
With generous han',
An' sick an' poor had cause to pray
For sich a man.

¹ winsome.

THE SMELL O' THE TURF

But weak are words to paint as due
The change that humble Nancy knew,
For Andy's wealth an' greatness grew
Beyond her fancy,
The house, the hall, the staircase too,
They staggered Nancy.

She nearly fainted to explore
The rooms with all their gilded store,
To meet the maids, in number more
Than Andy wanted,
To mark the saucy look they bore,
The airs they vaunted.

But blest was Nancy's fortune when
The housekeeper she made her frien'
Who gave her lessons now an' then
On how to plase,
And larnt her things beyont her ken
Of gentry's ways.

And sich was Nancy's native grace,
With artless tact she tuk her place,
And beat them holla in the race
That went afore her,
The sweetness of her homely face
Made all adore her.

O maidens, would ye larn the laws
To win the worthy man's applause?
'Tis not the handsome cheek that draws
 You'll often find;
In virtue's face we see the flaws,
 But never mind.

'Twas so with Nancy; people sought her
To catch the charm that Nature taught her,
That made her every place they brought her
 A fair attraction,
While honest Andy simply thought her
 Jist near perfection!

III.

But Nancy aye thought long for someone,
Some dacent country girl or woman
Reared like herself, with thoughts in common,
 Her days to share,
And talk of something else but Mammon,
 An' what to wear.

She wearied of the fuss an' bustle
In scenes where silks an' satins rustle,
Where worldly folk their fellows hustle,
 Both frien' an' foe,
Untiring in the common tussle
 To make a show.

Ah, discontent is hard to move
When mortals fail to look above,
An' hearts uncomforted by love
 Are racked with fear
That inattention seems to prove
 They grow less dear.

But civic functions here an' there,
The loads the great are called to bear
Left Andy little time to spare
 For home an' rest,
So loneliness an' then despair
 Filled Nancy's breast.

IV.

Weak is the barque to ride the gale
When once the pilot's spirits fail,
An' Nancy, lately blithe an' hale,
 Lost all her vigour,
An' soon become as thin an' pale
 As homeless beggar.

An honest sowl was Andy Kyle,
But blind as *are* men all the while;
So long as Nancy wore a smile
 He niver bothered,
An' she, good wife, with tender guile
 Her suff'ring smothered.

At length too faint to lift her head,
Wan prisoner in her stately bed
She lay, an' doctors spoke with dread
Of "swift consumption,"
While Andy mourned with shame inbred
His want of gumption.

For love was niver absent truly,
His good wee wife he cherished duly;
If, in her eyes, he acted coolly
He didn't mean it;
Says he, "The sun's aye blazin' fully,
Tho' clouds may screen it."

Ah, centred in our own affairs,
We lightly think of others' cares,
Then claim that nought our love impairs,
Or can remove:
'Tis want of sympathy that wears
The hearts we love.

But wounded by the sudden stroke,
The love in Andy's breast awoke,
An' soon he vowed to break the yoke
He laboured under,
Let all the city magnates croak,
Or stand an' wonder.

One ray of hope the doctors gave
To wrest her from the silent grave—
The murky town she be to lave
Without ado,
Perchance her native air might save,
An' pull her thro'.

As careless as the Autumn wind
For scenes of wreck it leaves behind,
See Andy go, his all resigned
For Nancy's sake,
While people swear he's lost his mind,
Sich fuss to make.

'Away, away without regret
For honours won or still to get,
If God will spare dear Nancy yet,
He'll ask no more,
Too long the fever an' the fret
For nought he bore.

How good of God to let us see
What humble men we ought to be,
And thro' affliction sets us free
From cords that bind—
His aim to grant in some degree
The saintly mind.

O, envy not the golden tide
Of others' wealth to thee denied;
Thou canst not know how sorely tried
 The rich may be,
Thou, too, art dear; let Love decide
 What's best for thee.

V.

Now with the lapse of winters twain,
Our hero we behold again;
The change of air was not in vain,
 For well an' strong
Is Nancy now, despite the pain
 She suffered long.

A mansion by the river's side,
With ample roof and gable wide,
Which mighty oaks stand round to hide
 In wintry weather—
The paradise for which she sighed—
 They share together.

A garden for the sultry day
Where infant winds delight to play;
A summer house 'mid hanging spray,
 For calm seclusion,
Where climbing rosebuds lose their way
 In sweet profusion.

A sound of music in the air
Aye greets the list'ner dreaming there,
When Spring conceals with foliage fair
 The piping crowd,
Or Winter sings 'mid branches bare
 His anthem loud.

The river's song to Andy's heart
More thought celestial can impart,
Than when in love with German art
 He went a-rovin',
And paid his tribute to Mozart,
 Bach or Beethoven.

Intent on antiquarian joys,
His cultured leisure he employs,
Prints, curios from foreign skies
 With care he keeps,
And dainty shelves of Indian toys
 In jostlin' heaps.

His income he delights to pour
Where want or sickness aid implore,
Six hundred pounds a year or more,
 The needful sum,
He spends to keep an open door
 For all who come.

His native vale around him shining,
Fair Nature light an' shade entwining,
In bosom of green hills reclining,
By Antrim shore;
Blue sea the distant landscape lining,—
What would he more?

Yet Nature brimful of attraction
Can ne'er create the sweet reflection
That gentle Nancy's word and action
In Andy breed,
Provoking still his deep affection
In thought an' deed.

In truth, a student of the science,
She knows the power of sweet compliance,
And scorns to move in soft defiance
Of Andy's will;
Thus, thus they live in fond alliance
As lovers still.

DAVY LONG

DRAW in your creepies¹ to the hate,
An' thrim that smoky lamp,
Put on another sod o' turf,
The night is coul' an' damp.

Am fearin' there's more rain afut,
Jist listen to the blast;
My stars! but Tammy's long in town,
Wheesht—there's the cart at last!

You, Sally, give the pot a stir,
Them porridge should be done;
I'll send you to your hammock, wanes,²
And that'll stop your fun.

You promised us a story, but—
You did, before we go,
About that funny beggarman
Who lived here long ago.

¹ stools. ² children.

'Ay, ay, oul' Davy Long you mane,
The kin'ly mother cried,
I wuz a wee thing like yerselves,
The night the crayther died.

Beyont the Whinney Hill we lived,
Not far from Uncle Joe's;
Och, och, a windy spot it wuz,
As all the counthry knows.

An' now an' then to pass the night
Would come poor Davy Long,
My father liked his hearty crack,¹
The childher liked his song.

"Long Davy" wuz the name he got,
Six fut he wuz an' more,
An' ivery weddin', ivery wake,
Saw Davy to the fore.

He'd sit an' kaly² by the hour
When supper wuz in view,
An' nothin' happened roun' the glens
But nāky³ Davy knew:—

¹ conversation.

² gossip.

³ shrewd.

The party at M'Clinton's barn,
The price o' Tamson's whate,
The row among the Vestry men
About the rector's gate.

An' Davy wuz that cliver too,
The weeds all growin' wil'
Their use for poultices he knew
To docthor cow, or chil'.

His cheek had aye the bit o' red
That done you good to see;
An' when you asked, "How are you mun?"
He'd say, "I'm rightilee."¹

But feth an' seng² the day come roun',
When Davy, like the rest,
Grew wake about the joints, an' that,
An' wheezy in the chest.

His remedies in vain he tried,
Herbs niver known to fail;
The neighbours said, "Try Dr. Goold,
He'll cure you, we'll go bail."

¹ pretty well. ² feth an' seng]without doubt.

"Say how you feel," the docthor cried,
He answered like a man!
*"I feel as if you tuk my heart,
An' squeezed it in your han'."*

The docthor smiled, an' thried his best,
Did all a docthor could,
But Davy went from bad to worse,
In short, he done no good.

I mind him peghin'¹ up the hill
One evenin' white as death,
An' every wheen o'² steps he tuk
He stopped to get his breath.

'Twuz comin' on till Chrissimis,
The snow wuz on the groun',
He stud a minute at the gate,
An' gazed an' gazed aroun'.

He seemed to murmur to the trees,
"Och, och, my day is done";
I saw the tear-dhrop on his cheek
And felt his end begun.

¹ breathing hard. ² wheen o']few.

We put the crayther till his bed,
And brought the docthor too;
But spite of all the care he got,
Poor Davy waker grew.

One thing about him all the time
We failed to undherstan'—
He be to get his staff in bed,
An' houl' it in his han'.

He niver yit let go his grip,
It vexed my mother sore,
An' when she kneeled to pray for him,
His staff he hugged the more.

She read a chapther at the place
That tells us God is love,
And begged him as he neared his end
To think o' Them above.

He wagged¹ my father to the bed
His last request to hear;
Siz he, "Ye see this quare oul' staff,
I've had it fifty year."

¹ beckoned.

“ O'er dale an' hill it helped me still,
A comrade thrue an' thried;
Before you screw the coffin down,
Jist lave it at my side.”

My father give his word: no more
He'd answer right or wrong;
And ere the sun wuz in the sky,
A corp wuz Davy Long.

To bury him the neighbours come,
All on a Chrissimis Eve,
But no relation, chick or chil',
He left behin' to grieve.

With that,¹ to make his promise good,
My father brought the staff,
But ere he lay it with the corp,
He found the head come aff!

He give a start, he cried aloud
“ What's this, what's this I see?
The staff is holla, filled with coin,
As full as full can be!”

¹ with that]thereupon.

Amazed, the neighbours gathered roun'
No longer cud they doubt,
As on the table in the room
He shook the guineas out.

Spade guineas, black with age and dust,
They reckoned ninety-four,
An' after them there jingled down
Three hundred sovereigns more.

They buried Davy an' his staff,
They kept the promise true,
An' then they had long commonin'¹
Of what wuz best to do.

In Ballytumulty they built
Ten houses for the poor,
Ten nice wee houses near the bridge
With gardens at the doer.

Lord, save us all from Davy's sin,
From Davy's love of pelf,
But can I blame the crayther much?
I feel as bad myself!

¹ discussion.

TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING

HOW oft some fair excuse we frame
Our good resolve to rid of blame,
When conscience makes our duty clear,
And prompts the gift to misery dear;
But calculating thoughts begin,
And blunt fair impulse born within,
And while we pity, we declare
Our need has left us nought to spare.
If blest with riches like the few
What noble actions we should do!
But circumstances and the hour
Deprive us of the longed for power.
Alas! that lack of wealth should prove
Our plea to cover lack of love,
Should cause occasion for the boast
'Tis aye the poor who give the most.

'Twas night; the moon was in the sky,
And not a fleecy cloud was nigh.
It had been snowin' aff an' on,
But now the heavy clouds wère gone,

Banked up all dimly in the west
Where one star, brighter than the rest,
Had gone to keep them company
Far out across the lonely sea.
The others glinted¹ out an' in,
As if they strove a prize to win,
An' took advantage of the frost
To gain the time in darkness lost.
The win' was now shut up an' quate,
As if it knew the hour was late,
An' row an' riot must forego
Amid the silence of the snow.
So not a whisper, not a soun'
Come from the sleepin' trees aroun';
When on a suddint from the shedda
There crossed oul' Tam M'Keever's medda
Two sturdy chieils,² with voices strong,
Who kailied³ as they tramped along.

The one was Willy M'Adoo,
A drouthy⁴ boy as neighbours knew,
An' Ned M'Guffin was the other,
Who often give the Peelers⁵ bother;
But not on mischief did they roam
So late at night an' far from home.
In short, the party had been long,

¹ glanced. ² young fellows. ³ gossiped.

⁴ thirsty. ⁵ police.

The crack¹ was loud, and loud the song,
While all too kind had been the host,
An' rather strong the "tay an' toast";
So now each felt his duty clear,
His wayward brother home to steer.
Not once or twice that frosty night
The home of each had shone in sight,
But neither would at home remain
An' lave his friend his lone² again.
Said each: "I'll see you back a piece,
For fear you'd meet some sthray police."
Thus half the night had lumbered thro'
Before they bid the last adieu.

Och, words are useless to declare
The love between this lovely pair
At seasons when the "tay an' toast"
Had loosed their tongues their love to boast.
To-night beneath yon starin' moon
The partin' time come aye too soon,
An' foun' them locked in long embraces,
Not half an inch between their faces.
"I'll tell you what it is," said Willy,
"(Don't think me daft or even silly)
I like you so, you cudn't vex me,
I'd give you anythin' you'd ax me."

¹ conversation.² his lone|alone.

"An' as for me," said Ned M'Guffin,
"There's them that calls me 'dhrinkin' ruffin,'
But you know better, an' it's thrue,
Am raley jist as fond of you."
"But wud you, Ned, as dacent be,
An' show yourself as kin' to me?
I'd give you anythin' you'd name,
Wud *you*, my jewel, do the same?
For instance, if you had two sheep,
Now, wud you give me one to keep?"
"I wud," said Ned, "without a doubt,
Nothin' you'd ask wud put me out."
"An' if you had two cows as well?"
"I'd give you one to milk or sell."
"An' if you had two donkeys too?"
"One should be yours, I tell you thrue."
"An' if two turkeys fit to roast?"
"I'd give the one you liked the most."
"An' if two pigs?" next Willy cried.
"Och, wait," said Ned, "be satisfied.
I have two pigs, a lovely pair,
Their match you'd not find anywhere;
To part with one I'm rather loath,
For, man alive, I want them both!"

THE UNRULY MEMBER

I WUDN'T for the world let on¹
The place it happened or the date,
I'll only say his name was John,
An' hers was Kate.

So, ladies, don't unaisy be,
Let me assure you in a word,
Not here in Ballytumulty
The thing occurred.

In this dear glen the weemen kin',
Whether of high degree or low,
To husbands' faults are always blin',
Or nearly so!

Here only harmony an' bliss
In each domestic circle reign,
Altho' it's hard to count on this,
When men complain—

¹ let on]confess.

Men with their quare, unsartin ways,
You're niver sure to have them long,
Let weemen try their best to plase,
There's somethin' wrong!

Well, let me tell of gentle Kate,
Her countless merits should be sung,
But, och, it pains me to relate
She had a tongue!

With it to manage John she'd try,
Would nobly press her good advice,
But he, ungrateful, would reply,
Nor take it nice.

At other times to wield her power,
This better plan her love preferred,
She'd hear him talk to her an hour,
Nor speak a word.

Now tho' it tried his patience sore
To hear her eloquence let loose,
Her silent way he dreaded more
Than her abuse.

It fell upon a winter eve
When John, since mornin' in the mire,
Was glad his horse and plough to leave
For kitchen fire.

But when he reached it, cold an' wet,
His worthy partner never stirred,
An' all his kindly greetin' met
Without a word.

Something had happened! that was sure;
In vain its nature John divined,
But very soon her sulks to cure
This plan designed.

The nooks an' corners of the room
He started fiercely to explore,
An' all the time a look of gloom
His visage bore.

The plates that stood in shinin' rows
He searched behind them all in turn,
The pockets of his Sunday clo'es,
The empty churn.

The settle-bed he opened out,
It seemed to him a likely spot,
The quilt an' sheets he flung about,
But found "it" not.

He looked in every bowl an' mug,
Behind the clock where cobwebs cling,
He tried the cracked out' China jug
That held the string.

Now Kate was meanwhile sittin' by,
Pretendin' not the least regard,
But with the corner of her eye
She watched him hard.

This dhreadful man was sore to bide,
She felt, in throth, quite overcome,
But, och, her temper and her pride
Long held her dumb.

'At last the boilin' point was reached,
No longer silent could she be,
She started from her chair and screeched
In lively key.

"John, John, you doited¹ crayther, stop!
 What in the world has gone astray?
 This blessed night I'm fit to dhrop,
 What is it, pray?"

"'Tis found," he cried, and danced about;
 "I knew I'd find it soon or late."
 "Found what?" she asked him, with a shout,
 "*Your tongue, good Kate!*"

¹ demented.

Betty of the Glens



INTRODUCTORY

IN vain the Muse shall prompt some ancient
theme,

Dear to the soul of leisure-loving dames,
Of love and valour linked in high romance
That sings the hapless fate of maiden fair
Who mourns her absent lover's slow return
In frowning turret by the moaning tide,
With nought to break the dread monotony
That fills the compass of her dreary day;
Save when thro' casement, opening to the beach,
She, lingering, eyes the hoary-crested waves
In foaming parallels assail the rocks,
Or burst in thunder on the lonely strand.
There, must she languish at her father's will,
'Till from the vow her faithful knight imposed
She breaks obedient, scattering to the winds
The living embers of undying love
To wed some present and persistent lord.

Chord more familiar to our homely muse
That sings th' unheeded sorrows of the poor
Our verse demands: nor shall the stilted phrase

Nor windy metaphor the tongue engage
Chanting this legend of the rural North.

Near Ballytumulty there used to stand,
Deep in the gloom of giant sally trees
That swung their boughs across the muddy lane,
A strange, unlovely cot, whose walls, once white,
Had gained thro' years a brown sepulchral shade.
The broken panes with rags were rudely filled,
And the worn thatch, in keeping with the whole,
Showed to the rain the peeping rafter bare.
Long had Spring flow'rs disdained to shed their
grace

In that wild garden of luxuriant weeds;
But round the base of th' unsightly walls
Ran maze of multitudinous marigold,
While thro' a shattered frame devoid of glass
The tall nasturtiums each returning year
Dispensed their lavish wealth of varied blooms,
As if to show the habitants within
Nature still lived the wreck to beautify.

This was the home, if home it might be named,
So sadly kept, so seldom occupied,
Of Betty Lee, a roving tinker's wife,
Who with her "man" and little wan-faced
wean
Would here resort in idle intervals,

That followed absence at some distant fair;
Here jovial neighbours of the drouthy¹ kind
Would love to gossip round the steaming
bowl;

But when the fragrant brew its strength revealed,
Would taste in full the might of Betty's wrath,
And the dread swiftness of her freckled fist.
Her reputation thro' the glens around
For self-control and virtues near allied
That make the total sum of wifely charm
Was not the value of a penny piece.

"The Targer" was the loveless name she bore.
But while no villager, to whom the pair
Was sight familiar, could in sooth extol
The flickering virtues of her hapless mate,
Still warm and deep amongst the rural folk
The sympathetic tide of feeling ran;
And him they pitied, grieving for the luck
That made the "harmless crayther" Betty's
man.

From her he learned in years now passed away
The habit, fatal to domestic peace,
Of self-indulgence. Oft its power he proved
To make him for the time his care forget;
But when the crop of woes showed plentiful,
He drained his cup with zeal continuous,
And with her sank more deeply in the mire.

¹ thirsty.

No casual eye that looked on Betty once
Could soon dismiss her image from his mind;
It was a face that children dream about
And screaming call for mother in the dark.
Not seldom on a winter afternoon
We've seen her stand, or reel across the court
That meets the market-square, deserted then
By farmer's cart and pedlar's noisy booth;
And when the rain or early gathering night
Indoors had sent e'en vagrants loitering yet,
Some visionary foe would Betty hail,
Or mayhap juvenile in outpost safe,
And furiously would swing her brawny arms,
Up to her shoulders bared, and hoarsely roar
For man or woman who had nerve enough
To try their mettle in impromptu fight.
It was a scene to touch the callous heart
With pity, when from broken hairpin loosed,
Her tresses foul had trailed their tawny length
In tangled knots across her grimy cheek,
And partly screened her bright repulsive eye,
Whose squinting glare the maddened brain
revealed;
While from frothing purple lips would pour
Th' unbridled flood of imprecation foul.
But sadder still, her' puny little one
In ragged guise, now on the humid ground,
Beating impatient feet and crying without pause,

“O, mammy, O my mammy”; raised anon
In kindly arms of stranger standing near,
Whose pleading words “The Targer” heeded not.
Tho’ Betty loved her solitary babe
After the manner of her tigress heart,
And in her sober spells would play with her,
Calling the child her own *wee doshy ban*,
And such caressing names as lie so sweet
Upon the lips of Celtic motherhood.
But who can trust the self-indulging frame
When appetite has curbed the guiding will?
Poor little Jinney, thro’ her parent’s sin
Neglected, soon became a public waif,
Like lambkin bleating on a lonely wild.

It happened in the early summer time,
Ere the hot sun had browned the dancing leaves,
Or dulled the voice of singing rivulets
That bandied melodies with amorous birds,
When Betty, with her man, poor Robin Lee,
And barefoot Jinney, now three summers old,
Had in their ramblings reached a village fair
Ten dusty miles from Ballytumulty.
There squatting in the shadow of a wall
That formed the gable of “The Moiley Cow,”
’Mid motley piles of damaged kitchen-ware
Did Robin earn a tolerable wage,
While Betty sought for customers around.

But when the roaring fair had run its course
And fainter grew the lowing of the kine,
As down the village street and o'er the bridge
To uplands new they took their straggling way ;
When farmers pressed around the tavern door,
Across the foaming cup to bid adieu,
Or clinch the bargains they began at morn,
Then Robin cast aside his soldering tools
And followed Betty in ; but not for long
To know serenity. When in the till
His last remaining coin the landlord dropped,
Robin was bundled forth to sleep away,
Prone on the ground, his potions' ill effects :
While to a lane adjacent Betty hied
To try conclusions with a giantess,
Who vexed her inoffensive soul at morn.

But whither had the truant Jinney fled ?
Unseen for hours, nor hindered by the care
Of fond, reluctant mother, to the distant fields
She strayed alone, an odd precocious elf,
Where, feasting on the crusts she craved or stole
From simple-minded children at the fair,
She sat amid the clover, making chains
Of daisies, till o'ercome with weariness,
She fell asleep. Waking at dusk, she found
The sun had left the sky, and silence reigned
O'er all things. From the neighbouring road

No sound of passing vehicle was heard,
And Jinney, wetted by the dew and faint
With hunger, grew alarmed. A wheeling bat
Against her forehead dashed, and with the shock
She fell upon the ground and cried aloud;
But bravely she arose and reached the lane
That led her to the road, where speedily
A carriage passed, whose occupants espied
The solitary mite in noisy grief.
Stopping, they learned the cause, and soon
between

The lady and her husband Jinney sat,
Wiping her face and lisping all she knew
About her home and slender history.
Her name was Jinney, nothing else but that;
Her father mended broken pans and things;
Was always "on the spree," and mother, too;
And Jinney aye was hungry; home was miles
And miles away; they slept in barns at night:
Home with the lady she would like to go;
Her father and her mother minded not.

A lonely wife it was who questioned her,
Who never knew the thrill a mother knows
When her first babe lies drinking in its nest.
Unsated by the love of sturdy lord,
Too strong to have occasion for her care,
And yearning still some weakling to sustain,

All, all her mother's unspent love rushed forth
To Jinney, whom she longed to call her own.
But while her husband acquiesced, he nursed
The faint, yet foolish hope her parents' love
Would seek her yet; so to some passing folk
He told the tale, while to her future home
Twice ten long miles away our Jinney sped.

No storm of grief did Betty's breast invade
When, after victory o'er the giantess,
She sobered down, and Jinney came no more
To whimper at her mother's draggled skirt.
The child, she said, provoked her, wanting bread,
Aye wanting bread, when she had none to give;
She guessed, withal, some farmer's rosy wife
To hospitable home had carried her,
So troubled not. But keenly Robin felt
The loss of Jinney, and with deep concern
Bewailed his dull neglect. Four weary days
The fields around the village he explored
With varying hopes and fears; but to his aid
The dread police he shrewdly summoned not,
Lest his misfortunes might be multiplied!
Kind women watched him till he went away
Disconsolate, with Betty at his heels,
Walking as in a dream. Awaking soon,
He loudly swore to Ballytumulty

Return he never would without the wean,
Without the brave wee wean, now lost and gone.
Well, if with equal firmness he had vowed
No more to gratify the fell desire
That spoiled him of his peace and made him
mourn.

But no reform he knew. In sooth, his grief
A deeper longing for indulgence bred,
As if excess his memory could release
From chains that bound it to the painful past.

At length in failing health the reckoning came,
And Robin 'gan to droop. A hollow cough
Soon told its tale, and even Betty feared
His days were numbered. Lonely seemed the road
To her, for he was silent, and no more
For low carousal minded. 'Twas a grief
She found not easy to be borne, yet one
More tolerable than the gentle mood
In which he hid himself—not answering back
With scornful oath her warring words,
According to his wont. As weeks passed on,
And hope more sickly grew, 'twas good to mark,
When faintly burned the taper of his life,
The smouldering fire of virtues long concealed
Wax daily stronger. Trembling now, he neared
The awful threshold of the Land Unknown,
And feared his woeful record barred the hope

Of mercy from the Maker he had scorned.
Yet in his breast a longing to repair
The evils wrought in bygone hours remained.
So, yielding to the pressure of his wife,
To Ballytumulty he turned his face,
There 'mid his friends his suff'ring days to end.

Along the rugged slopes that crown the vale,
Where lay the ruins of his former home,
Behold them on their way. 'Tis late in March,
And timid Spring not yet has power to slay
Grim wounded Winter howling o'er the plain.
Cold gusts of rain sweep upward from the Lough,
'And chill the weary travellers—toiling hard
Since early morn across th' unsheltered bog.
With little food, e'en Betty feels the strain,
While Robin, hanging mutely on her arm,
Is faint and dying. Whither shall they turn?
No labourer's cot is near, no friendly barn;
Only an empty church with steepled roof,
And diamond window panes all shining cold.

Then, then awoke in Betty's rugged breast
The kindly woman's nature, dormant long.
Wringing her hands, she cried in her despair,
"O God of Heaven, pity us this night."
Tho' murmuring rather to herself the prayer
Than to the unseen Father, He gave ear,

And oped her eyes, bedimmed by anxious tears,
To spy a grassy laneway, skirting close
A garden dotted o'er with silent graves.
Soon, step by step, a broken stile they reached ;
Anon by devious turns the farmyard wide
Pertaining to a rectory, unobserved
Amid the trees. There ended Betty's quest :
For, lo ! a cosy harness room she found
And made her own. A welcome hearth it showed,
With the white ashes of a recent fire.
Some children's toys about the floor were strewn,
While a maimed rocking-horse the corner filled.
In shorter time than needs to tell the tale,
A glowing fire of turf its comfort shed
On Robin, resting on a hay-built couch.
But aye the deathly pallor of his face
And glazing eye she noticed, fearing much
His life would slip away ere food she found.
In agony his hollow cheek she kissed,
First time for years, and with her tattered skirt
The death-dew from his brow she wiped away
Moaning, " Och, Robin, is it come to this ? "

Then forth she stole, and in the gloaming found
The rectory kitchen, nor delayed to knock,
Yet, shyly entering, did her woes recount
To mild-faced maid with apron snowy white,
The eldest daughter of a numerous house,

Who, as it chanced, was in authority
In absence of her parents from the home.
She, moved to sympathy by Betty's grief,
Some goodly blankets found, and nourishment
Adapted to the dying sufferer's need.
But all too late her kindly service came;
The feeble candle of poor Robin's life
By blasts of dissipation long disturbed
Now flickered in its socket, going out.
Yet recked he nothing that his day was o'er,
But, ah, the heaped-up memory of the past
Like nightmare on his wounded spirit lay,
And marred his slumbers. Often thro' the night
He spoke of Jinney, who five summers past
Had vanished like a dream: but from his lips
No word of censure fell, as once it fell,
Upon the wife whose new-born tenderness
Had come to soothe him in his dying hour.

When thro' the cobwebs on the window pane
The dawn its earliest rays began to pour,
And low and sickly burned th' unheeded lamp,
He restless turned him on his rustling couch,
And feebly cried, "O Betty, if we had the Book—
The Book that talks about the love of God."
She thro' the untidy room a search began
And found instead, amid the broken toys,
A ragged hymn-book: 'twas the last to serve

The rectory children playing there at "Church."
'And long the rhymes of prayer and praise she read,
Till one brief verse his dying fancy caught:

"Faint not when guilty and undone,
With frowning death in view,
The blood of Jesus Christ His Son
Avails for even you."

Again, again by wakeful Robin urged,
The simple lines she read till, broken sobs
Preventing her, she laid the book aside.
In truth, her grief for Robin passing hence
And the remembrance of her own sad ways
Left her as sick of heart as Robin's self,
As eager for the comforting of heaven.
So when he wondered if the words were true
And fain would find them in the Book itself,
Poor Betty to the rectory hurried back,
The kindly daughter of the house to bring.
She, nothing loath, the Way of Life declared,
And with sweet gleanings from the sacred text
She gently soothed the dying sufferer's ear,
Dispelling doubt, assurance leading in,
Faith cent'ring on the Death at Calvary.
Anon, with Betty near to hold his hand,
And whisper of the peace she too had found,
He sighed his gratitude, and fell asleep.

At noon returned the rector and his wife,
Glad to relieve their daughter of her care.
Next day, in shadow of an ancient yew
That sentinelled a group of humble graves
In corner of that lonely trysting place,
They scooped an earthen couch, and hid away
The corpse that only one poor weeper owned.
But from the clouds that dulled the churchyard sky,
The sun broke out in genial sympathy,
And filled the compass of that mouldy cell,
As if to speak with nature's eloquence
Of cloudless glory after life of gloom.

Beneath the rector's roof a home was found
For Betty, where the door was ever shut
Against the memory of her past misdeeds:
Kind human hearts her native worth discerned,
And, with the charity that heaven bestows,
They lent their aid, unravelling with care
The tangled threads of talents misapplied,
And taught her how to turn them to account.
It was a home of softening influence,
Where lives harmonious holy impulse stirred
To righteous imitation. Moved thereby
Poor Betty struggled to redeem the past;
In which fair aim the godly rector played
No slender part, but led her in the path
Of sweet obedience to the will divine

Revealed in Holy Writ. And as she learned,
Thro' humble consciousness of hourly need,
The saintly habit of continuous prayer,
Her faith and love in sure proportion grew.
So that in time her influence in the home
Came not behind in fragrance that which flowed
From the good rector and his gentle wife :
For not more potent were the golden words,
That fell unmeasured from her master's lips,
Than the soft calm and self-control that marked
The goings of her mistress in the house,
Where, thro' ascendancy of grace, she proved
A blessing to her husband, and a help.

How many were the messages fulfilled
By Betty, who, as angel of her mistress,
Was known as far as Ballytumulty,
Three miles away, where folk respected her
Whom once they had derided or condemned.
Behold the virtue of a life transformed !
But if at intervals it might befall
Some thoughtless indiscretion brought distress ;
When, thro' the quick'ning of forgotten pride,
She in the net was taken unawares
And with her tongue spake unadvisedly ;
The lapse that trivial seemed in others' eyes
To hers would bring the tears of self reproach,
And send her stealing forth when darkness fell

To stand in dews of dusk by Robin's grave
Where hollow winds sang endless requiems.
There, linking with the past her present bliss,
She mused upon her own unworthiness,
'And fresh enduement from on high implored
To walk amid the snares that round her lay.

So passed away the years, the changing years,
To all distributing in that dear home
The common heritage of joy and care,
Till suddenly one weary Sabbath eve
An unseen messenger from Paradise
The rector summoned, as he lay at rest
In corner of his study; and he went,
Not lingering for an instant to bestow
His parting benison on those he loved.
But while his loss the people sadly mourned,
Doubting the Wisdom that removed their friend
So swiftly from his cherished toil on earth,
His widow rested mute, in heart assured
He passed to fuller service in the skies.

With his departure, home was home no more,
And Betty's mistress with her daughters twain,
The remnant of a goodly progeny,
Must needs forsake the rectory in the glens,
With all its wealth of stream, and bird, and flower,
Henceforth in sombre city to reside,

And Betty's grateful ministry no more
Was needed. 'Twas a blow not less severe
To her than to the kindly hearts who loved
The sunshine of her silent cheerfulness,
Impervious to the ruffling power of words;
And carefully another home they sought,
Where like appreciation she might share.

Then came at last the morn, the dreaded morn,
When Betty, blind with weeping, bade farewell
To those familiar faces loved so long.
'Twas golden Autumn; warm and bright the day;
With undiminished force the sun poured down
His sultry rays, as if he would arrest
The progress of decay in shrub and tree.
Life lingering in all things seemed to cry
To Betty, "Go not yet"; and as the cart,
Of rustic build, with all her worldly goods
Passed 'neath the silver poplars at the gate,
A shower of withered leaves besprinkled her,
As if the trees would weep in fellowship;
While solitary robins flitted near,
And sang a cheering song of sympathy.

Twice fifteen miles on that momentous day
She travelled, and for leagues the journey led
Thro' lonely moss, where desultory groups
Of men and women shaped the sodden turf,
Or piled the clumps for coming winter's need.

At hand were ragged little ones at play
Round scattered smouldering fires, whose fragrant
smoke

Wreathed upwards in the mild October haze,
And sweeter made the air, already sweet.
Not rarely did she meet the groaning cart
Laden with sheaves, last of the waiting "stooks"
That filled the harvest field, now borne away
For storage in the haggard's ample stack.
Once as they lumbering passed a village green,
A tinker and his wife did Betty spy,
With barefoot urchin toddling in the rere;
And Betty started as with glistening eye
She watched the group, and thought of former
days.

Sight of that little child recalled once more
The memory, always dear, of her she lost.
Did she yet live? And if the Lord allowed
That one day they should meet, would Betty see
In Jinney's weal the fruit of daily prayer?

The sun was sinking when, with weary frame
Good Betty lighted from her springless cart,
And at her future home a welcome found.
A stately house it proved, magnificent
Beyond the limit of expectancy,
Where she was one of many brought to serve
The splendid squire, his wife, and only child,—

Theirs by adoption, so the legend said—
A maiden fair, of beauteous face and form,
With native sweetness brooding in her eyes,
Whose unaffected grace approval won
From all who in her magic circle moved.

Now list the wondrous sequel to our tale,
Tho' feeble is the pen that pictures it;
But who in fitting words might paint the joy
Tumultuous, yea, the agony that woke
In Betty's bosom, when with startled gaze
The daughter of the house she first beheld,
And recognised with love intuitive,
None other than the very babe she nursed
At her own breast twice ten long years ago?
The mole on Jinney's brow was evidence.
To clasp her daughter in a wild embrace,
Rain fervid kisses on her lips and eyes,
To tell her name with tears of ecstasy
And claim her as her offspring, hers in truth,
Was the first impulse wildered Betty knew;
But with that sudden thought a second came,
Dear Jinney, ('twas the name that marked her yet,)
Discerned her not, remembered her no more.
How could she publish her identity,
And bitter make the cup of Jinney's bliss?
Should she at Jinney's cost enrich herself,
And blight her daughter's fame before the world?

All these regards revolving in her mind
Forbade the consummation coveted.
Nor was the struggle long, tho' fierce at first,
When she the sacrifice recalled to mind
Of One Who for her sake had suffered loss,
That thro' His poverty she might be rich.

So Betty bore her cross and daily died,
Content in sweet obscurity to live,
That Jinney's days unshadowed might remain.

But when three summers later rang the bells,
The wedding bells, and Jinney gave her hand
To noble scion of an ancient house,
Whose ample forest crowned the neighbouring
hills,
The bride must needs have Betty come anon,
'And play the needed rôle of housekeeper.
For Betty's care was indispensable,
Her love, said Jinney, like a mother's love.
And when sweet children's voices filled the home,
'Twas Betty's magic name they learned to lisp—
The fairy power that stood for everything.

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